

A MODERN TEMPLE OF THESPIS.

Description of Boyd's Theater, to Be Dedicated Thursday Night.

TRIUMPH OF ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS.

Rich Ornamentation Fitly Accompanies Acoustic Properties and "Aight Lines" which are Well Nigh Perfect.

WHEN Boyd's theater is thrown open to the amusement loving public, next Thursday evening, it will be found by the great audience which will undoubtedly be present, that the Orient and the Occident have come together under the sign of Thespis.

"From a plain of A. S. P.," remarked the late Mr. Carlyle in one of his most brilliant moments of reflection, "to a seat at the London opera in the Haymarket, that a road have me traveled."

The distinguished sage had himself, upon one occasion, been induced to take a seat in the London opera, which he abandoned during the halcyon, upon the ground, as he subsequently explained, that "he hadn't the heart to stay and watch a woman with an immortal soul making a Manx penny of herself."

But Carlyle's biliousness does not affect the major portion of mankind, who love distraction, amusement, entertainment, and seek these diversions in the theater as the most legitimate place in which to pass away a few hours that might otherwise hang heavily.

And to gratify this growing taste for art and for pleasure Boyd's theater, which will be opened Thursday evening, has been built upon the completion of the old Boyd theater, now known as the Farnam Street theater, and its dedication in 1881 by the city of Omaha, which has been the most loved and the citizens of Omaha, whether theater-goers or not, regarded the opening of that modern temple of the muses as the light of a new era.

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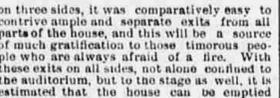
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the public become a secondary consideration when the owner of the building desires to augment his revenue from the rents of stores, offices, etc., and per consequens the building instead of being a success from an artistic standpoint, becomes from the beginning a second rate place of entertainment because of the narrowness of the hall.

The designer of an opera house is at every point a compromise between conflicting claims. Fortunately there was no question between the two great divisions of the house, the stage and the auditorium and both these divisions have received great care at the hands of the architects, McEitarick & Son of St. Louis, who have built many of the leading theaters of the country.

But it is evident from the plan that the dependencies of the auditorium have been in every degree sacrificed to the auditorium. This sacrifice is not of the stairways, by any means, but simply in the foyer which is narrowed beyond what an architect entirely unhampered as to space would probably think desirable for the free circulation of a portion of an audience between the acts.

The entrances are exits are indeed entirely ample. It has often been pointed out how far inferior modern public buildings are in means of access and departure to those of the Romans. It would not occur to anybody to call the doorway of a modern building vomitoria, even if modern notions of verbal propriety did not restrain him. Here, however, with the rare good fortune of a building standing free



MANTEL IN RECEPTION ROOM.

on three sides, it was comparatively easy to contrive ample and separate exits from all parts of the house, and this will be a source of great gratification to those timid people who are always afraid of a fire. With these exits on all sides, not alone leading to the auditorium, but to the stage as well, it is estimated that the house can be emptied readily in three minutes.

So much for a house that is built on the ground floor. The interior of a theater is distinctly established by experience as the amphitheatrical, and very few innovations upon this typical form are possible. The amphitheater in the new house seems elongated beyond what is usual, and then widens at the stage end so as to nearly give the form of a lyra than of "the glittering horseshoe's simple round," which belongs to the conventional temple of the lyric drama. The modification of the curve which produces this result is however slight.

It is in the proscenium that the architects have achieved their greatest victory, for it is elaborate to a degree yet thoroughly in keeping with the style of the interior, which is modern Romanesque. The height, lines and the acoustics so indispensable to the perfect house have commanded no small attention of the designers of the structure and to a large extent they will be found with perfect accuracy in the simple and elongated gallery instead of the horse-shoe shape may possibly detract somewhat from both those absolutely necessary adjuncts to the complete theater. This, however, is a matter of conjecture and can only be decided upon the night of the opening.

The stage is the point of any theater especially vulnerable to fire, it is of prime importance to confine to the stage any fire that may originate there, for the destiny of the theater almost proverbially hangs by a thread. There is scarcely a famous theater in the world which has not been rebuilt more than once.

In order to comply with the city ordinance relative to theaters, which is very largely patterned after the New York ordinance upon the same subject, it was found necessary to make the proscenium arch of fire tile, which admits of high ornamentation. This tile cuts off the stage entirely from the auditorium and with the aid of the asbestos curtain ought to successfully keep fire from getting to the main portion of the house.

In addition to this very necessary precaution the partition over the stage has been re-erected by the introduction of tile, the fly galleries being made of corrugated iron, the stairways leading to the loft being of iron, built in spiral form.

There is no entrance to the stage from the body of the house, all communication having taken place in that direction by the best wisdom of the architects.

The stage entrance is on the east side of the building passing through a wide entrance on the north wall along the side wall to the stage door.

While the architect deserves great praise for the airiness and brightness of the auditorium, the fresco artist deserves unstinted commendation for the work which has made the theater one of the handsomest in the country.

While the glories of mural painting have lately been eclipsed by the predominating popularity of its younger sister, the easel picture, the fresco has not been total, and given the proper impetus, its sun may yet shine with more than pristine splendor. True, the pictorial story-telling age is gone, at least for us, for prosaic type has usurped their functions, but rising generations will imbibe more copious draughts from more

generous founts, and in this fact the hope of fresco's return as a fine art rests. Art is the high priest of the emotions, the great humanizer, and to humanize the millions, mural painting became the acknowledged queen of art, and the best vehicle for a universal, beneficent art than the wall ever had.

And it is upon the walls of the Boyd theater that the artist, filled with the best thoughts of the Italian and Austrian masters, has shown the beauties of fresco painting, and has given to Omaha an interior which will always be a delight to the spectator, who sits beneath his gentle touch. For twenty years Paolo Pavesich, who has the decorations in charge, much of them having been done by himself, has been the reproduction of a muralist. A student of Vicchini of Milan, and Villani of Florence, he has absorbed the best thoughts of those modern masters in addition to having been permitted to study the frescoes at San' Autrogio, Le

Grado, San Maurizio and the Lorenzo in the former city and the frescoes in the latter, Santa Croce, Capello Gaieto, Capello Tizoti, Santo Spirito, Santa Felice, the Hall of Mars, San Minuto, Duomo Fiesole in Florence. For was his education confined alone to these two cities, but he has made a study of the great frescos throughout the old world, which has fitted him for the work in hand.

Not content with these rare advantages he has left the impress of his art on the sultan's palace in Constantinople, and in the czar's palace in St. Petersburg. In addition to having ornamented the interior of many theaters and private residences, an Austrian by birth, M. Pavesich is imbued with the true artistic feeling, and his pictures, while now and then remarkable in the harmony of their colors and in the manner of their toning in with the style of architecture.

The lobby, 34x28 feet, is spacious and very beautifully decorated. Heavy ornamental tiles, in mosaic designs, form the floor. The woodwork is in quarter oak, oil finish, with an artistically carved frieze, showing oak leaves and berries. The box office projects in semi-circular shape about five feet, the counter being of variously colored marble. Rainbow-tinted art glass, in floral designs, which forms the frieze, sets off the heavy beveled glass of the window. In front of the box is a highly polished brass railing set in oak, through which the theater-goer must pass to the box-office. The frescoing of the ceiling is most artistically done. Upon a pink background the mural artist has depicted rural and sylvan figures in appropriate colors. An elaborate ornamental center piece enhances the already brilliant and pleasing effect. Created on leaves and flowers, the scene is on acanthus leaves, from the border. The elegantly carved doors which open into the foyer are fitted with imported frosted glass. On either side of the foyer thirty marble steps lead up to the balcony while the floor is finished in hard wood. The fresco design of the foyer is East Indian in character, the foliage being massed in groups, the sky warm and effective in composition, making an entrancing ground for the luxuriant growth of tropical flora.